Expeditionary Warfare School Distance Education Program
Marine Corps Planning Process Tactical Decision Exercise (MCPP TDE)

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In 2002, the Marine Corps Training and Education Command (TECOM) merged the Amphibious Warfare School and the Command and Control Systems School into a new curriculum called the Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS). Every Marine Captain must complete EWS as part of his/her Professional Military Education (PME). There are three avenues available for Marines to complete EWS: 1) the Resident EWS; 2) the faculty-led Seminar EWS Distance Education Program (DEP), and 3) the Individual Guided Study (IGS) DEP.

Both the Seminar DEP and the IGS DEP fall under the purview of the distance education program (DEP) since they are completed outside of the EWS schoolhouse. The EWS Seminar DEP is offered to eligible students at specific locations throughout the world. The seminars consist of weekly two-hour sessions facilitated by adjunct faculty members. The IGS DEP is available to students who choose to complete EWS independently and at their own pace often because they are not stationed near a Seminar Program or because their work schedule simply cannot accommodate attending the Seminar sessions.

The new EWS curriculum at the schoolhouse has been re-vamped to include instructional emphasis on command and control, combined arms operations, warfighting skills, tactical decision-making, naval operations, and Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) expeditionary operations. Resident students are taught to plan and execute operational plans on the operational planning tool, Command and Control Personal Computer (C2PC). Throughout the curriculum, training at the Resident EWS is conducted in conjunction with practical exercises that utilize the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP). Students in the EWS DEP have identical training requirements however, seminar students participate in scaled down, faculty-led, paper-based practical exercises, and the IGS student reads about the MCPP in doctrinal publications.

In an effort to bridge the gap between the training available to students at the Resident EWS and the distance students, the College of Continuing Education (CCE) is seeking to incorporate technology-based learning into the EWS DEP. To reach this end, the CCE intends to develop a prototype integrating SCORM conformant interactive multimedia instruction (IMI) with a HLA compliant tactical decision-making simulation (TDS) that can be accessed by distance students. The outcome will be an integrated piece of instruction and practical exercise/simulation that can be used to support and enhance the EWS DEP in a SCORM and HLA compliant environment.

The Marine Corps PME Order (MCO P 1553.4A) and the Competencies for the Marine Corps Captain (MCO 1510.99) specify the training requirements taught at EWS. Within the Marine Corps, there are approximately 5100 active duty Marine Captains and about 1900 Marine Reserve Captains. In addition to Captains, some CWO3s and CWO4s are required to complete various segments of EWS. The EWS schoolhouse can only

accommodate 190 Marine students each year, which means that the vast majority of Marines complete EWS PME either through the Seminar DEP or the IGS DEP. Given that Marines in the self-paced program are on different schedules within the curriculum than the Seminar DEP students, and that they are geographically dispersed across the globe, it is not feasible to bring them together in a collaborative exercise. For this reason, the prototype is geared towards the distance student working independently and is intended to increase the learner's engagement as well as enhance their learning experience.

A major thread throughout the EWS curriculum is the Marine Corps Planning process (MCPP). An integral part to the MCPP is the use of graphic overlays to aid in the planning and development of military courses of action (COAs) and to wargame selected COAs. Overlays are generated using the Command & Control Personal Computer (C2PC) software application. The C2PC provides a geographically-based common operational picture (COP) through the use of overlays and other objects that can be readily utilized throughout the MCPP. The COP is a graphical representation of the perspective of the battlespace to include enemy forces, friendly forces, and environmental conditions and consequently plays a significant role in the planning process for military operations. The C2PC is being deployed throughout the Marine Corps and was recently named the Joint tactical COP workstation.

Students in the Resident EWS receive hands-on training with the C2PC in the conduct of continuous practical applications utilizing the MCPP. The Seminar DEP students also have MCPP practical applications as part of their curriculum but they seldom have access to the C2PC application, and therefore do not always have the benefit of hands-on learning. The curriculum for the IGS DEP varies from the others in that practical applications are not included; instead IGS students rely completely on doctrinal publications to learn the MCPP.

The MCPP IMI will incorporate the "look and feel" of the C2PC throughout the course as appropriate. For instance, the C2PC interface shall be reproduced graphically, to include actual C2PC screen shots, to aid in simulating a task that is performed on the C2PC. To provide a degree of authenticity for the student, the MAGTF-XXI TDS will emulate the C2PC interface as well as basic C2PC functionality. Maintaining this consistent 'look and feel' between the IMI and the TDS will reinforce the students' learning.

For the prototype, the COA Wargaming lesson will interface with the Sample RTE (SCORM 2004) and will also integrate with the MAGTF-XXI TDS. The extended development period for the COA Wargaming IMI lesson will not impede development of the prototype given that a fully-functional IMI lesson is not required to develop an alpha version of the prototype. The emphasis of the alpha version prototype will focus on modifying the functionality of MAGTF-XXI and solving the technical aspects of integrating the IMI lesson with the TDS.

For the prototype, the MCPP on-line instruction will interface to the SCORM 2004 Run Time Environment (RTE). The MAGTF-XXI TDS will be used as the practical exercise game engine for the COA Wargaming lesson. The COA Wargaming lesson will be web-based, but since MAGTF-XXI is not an on-line capable TDS, the TDS will be launched locally on a PC. The TDS progress information will be recorded and the status (In-

Progress, Not Attempted, or Completed) will be returned to the MCPP IMI for subsequent processing by the courseware to determine lesson mastery.